

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY EUR/NE:RSTHOMPSON
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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRD, FI

SUBJECT: APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS FOR ICEBREAKER

1. A CONFERENCE COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE AND SENATE
APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEES AGREED AUGUST 10 TO THE
APPROPRIATION OF 20 MILLION DOLLARS FOR DESIGN AND
CONSTRUCTION OF AN ICEBREAKER AS PART OF THE FY 1978
SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS BILL. (THE SENATE
PREVIOUSLY HAD VOTED 60 MILLION DOLLARS AND THE HOUSE
NOTHING.)

2. THE CONFERENCE COMMITTEE REPORT IS AS FOLLOWS: BEGIN
TEXT.

CHAPTER IX - DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, COAST GUARD

ACQUISITION, CONSTRUCTION, AND IMPROVEMENTS
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AMENDMENT NO. 65: APPROPRIATES 20,000,000 DOLLARS
INSTEAD OF 60,000,000 DOLLARS AS PROPOSED BY THE
SENATE. THE CONFEREES ARE IN AGREEMENT THAT A NEW
ICEBREAKER IS REQUIRED TO REPLACE THE WESTWIND.
THE CONFEREES BELIEVE THAT THIS REPLACEMENT VESSEL
SHOULD BE DESIGNED SO THAT ITS PRIMARY MISSION IS FOR

ICEBREAKING ON THE GREAT LAKES BUT SHOULD ALSO HAVE DUAL DRAFT CAPACITY TO PERMIT ICEBREAKING IN OTHER REGIONS DURING THE PERIOD OF THE YEAR NOT NEEDED IN THE GREAT LAKES.

THE CONFEREES DIRECT THE COAST GUARD TO PROCEED WITH THIS DESIGN IN THE MOST EXPEDITIOUS MANNER AND BE IN A POSITION TO AWARD A CONSTRUCTION CONTRACT NO LATER THAN DECEMBER 31, 1980. THE CONFEREES ALSO DIRECT THE COAST GUARD TO REPORT EVERY THREE MONTHS ON THE PROGRESS MADE IN ACCOMPLISHING THIS PURPOSE. END TEXT.

3. THE FINNISH EMBOFF FOLLOWING THIS QUESTION COMMENTED TO DEPTOFF THAT WARTSILA WOULD HAVE PREFERRED THE SENATE LANGUAGE WHICH WOULD HAVE OPENED THE WAY FOR PURCHASE OF AN EXISTING FINNISH DESIGN AND THUS SAVED A COUPLE OF YEARS, BUT AT LEAST THIS ACTION LEFT OPEN SOME HOPE FOR THE FUTURE BECAUSE WARTSILA ALSO HAS THE ABILITY TO BUILD OTHER SHIPS.

4. THE CONFERENCE REPORT IS EXPECTED TO BE APPROVED BY BOTH HOUSES AND THE BILL SIGNED BY THE PRESIDENT IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS. VANCE

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